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SUBJECT: TFHA01: One Relief Flight Departs Venezuela

REF: STATE 4909; STATE 4807; STATE 4854; 10 CARACAS 65

¶1. (SBU) Summary: A C-130, Venezuela's fifth relief flight, departed January 21 reportedly carrying 12 tons of supplies and 48 personnel. Local press reported that a Russian IL-76 carrying Venezuelan relief supplies to Haiti was unable to obtain landing authorization. In fact, the aircraft departed Venezuela late on January 21. The Joint Armed Forces staff equivalent has not replied to requests for a coordination meeting. End Summary.

By Air

¶2. (SBU) Vice Minister for Latin America and the Caribbean Francisco Arias Cardenas and Dr. Luis Diaz Curbelo, National Director of Civil Defense, oversaw the departure on January 21 of one C-130 flight delivering 12 tons of supplies and 48 personnel to Haiti from Maiquetia airport. Media reports describe the passengers as doctors from the 51st Simon Bolivar battalion, fire fighters from Caracas and rescue experts from the National Civil Defense Office. Diaz told the media that an additional 150 tons would arrive by air in the following days, but no additional information was given.

¶3. (SBU) Local press reported January 21 that a Russian IL-76 with aid has been stranded in Venezuela for more than 24 hours awaiting clearance from the U.S. air traffic controllers to land in Haiti. The plane is carrying medical supplies, food and drinking water, and is part of a joint Venezuelan-Russian relief operation. Embassy DATT spoke to the Deputy Director of Civil Defense and learned that the Russian plan had received a landing slot for January 21 and departed for Haiti. (Ref d.)

By Sea

¶4. (SBU) The five ships that departed Venezuela with aid for Haiti plan to make port in the Dominican Republic where the GBRV will ask the U.N. to secure passage of the relief supplies overland into Haiti.

Coordination

¶5. (SBU) The DATT has not been able to meet with the

Venezuelan Defense Joint Staff.

¶6. (SBU) The Foreign Ministry's Director for North America will meet with PolCouns on January 27 to discuss a range of issues including Haiti.

CAULFIELD